REPORT FROM HONG KONG:

# A Policy For Asia

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IT IS pretty generally admitted that our Asia policy — if one can call it that — has failed. We allowed the agents of international Communism to bamboozle and confuse us, while Mao and his men strangled the Chinese republic. We allowed a brazen conspiracy to weave a web of falsehoods and propaganda around the true nature and purposes of the Chinese Reds: their hatred of the United States and their determination to assist Soviet Russia in bringing about its defeat. This is now obvious to almost all. Knowledge of it was a major factor in General Eisenhower's victory at the polls.

The sins and errors of the past have been told over and spelled out in some detail. But post-mortems are enlightening only up to a point. With the election of a new President, the time has clearly come to turn away from the past and its defeats, and look to the future with all its possibilities. Now, certainly, is the time to forge a positive and effective policy for United States action in Asia.

Asians constantly ask their American friends what the United States is trying to do, what it really wants. "What is your country's policy? Do you have a policy?" are the questions heard oftenest. We say we are against Communism, but this isn't at all how it looks to them. True, we took up the gage in Korea without a moment's hesitation; but Asians feel that there need never have been a war in Korea in the first place if we had been the least bit aware of the true situation. Often it seemed as if we quite frankly favored the Communists. But whether the Reds conquered the Chinese mainland with our help or in spite of ourselves is an academic question to the

*Last month Senator Styles Bridges proposed a positive policy for Korea. Here Edward Hunter points out the necessary elements of an all-Asian policy. Mr. Hunter is a noted Far Eastern correspondent; his book,* Brainwashing in Red China, *was published earlier this year.*

people on the spot. What impresses them is that the patient died under our treatment. Our 1949 White Paper sounded to Asians like the writing off of free China. They knew that the only alternative was Communism; they could scarcely believe that we didn't know this too.

When an alarmed American public finally arrested a course of action that in effect gave aid and comfort to the Communist cause, we said we would "let the dust settle" — a nice way of announcing that we would do nothing. Soon after, the United States was forced to adopt a "containment" policy, in answer to the Communist strategy of thrusting out here, then there, and then in the next place. The Communists continued to fight on all fronts. But we foolishly supposed that we could arrest things where they were; we made it our formal policy to surrender the initiative to the Kremlin.

This negative American policy does not work. The Communists warn the non-Communist fringe areas of the Asian continent every day that their turn is next. Everywhere in Asia the Red terror threatens, if not today, then tomorrow. In such a situation Asians who hear the consequences of a feeble United States policy are inclined to give up as futile any resistance to Communist pressure and terror.

This sense of hopelessness, which the Communists of course exploit, can be counteracted only by a simple and inspiring United States policy that makes sense to and heartens the average man in Asia. Almost any strong policy would be better than none.

ASIANS watched with consternation as the United States abdicated its postwar position of leadership, letting Soviet power expand; today many Asians fear that the U.S.S.R. and not the United States is the stronger.

There is often a desperate note in an Asian's voice when he reminds you that the United States must lead the free world; he doesn't quite believe that we know it. The Soviet Union understands this need to lead; its strategy is simply to rally any and all opposition to the United States. Every issue is decided on the practical basis: does it help or harm the United States?

A positive United States policy for Asia must insist on our exerting the authority without which leadership is hollow. Exercising our authority to achieve mutually agreed upon goals is proper and desirable. Yet the Communists have been able to stalemate us everywhere in Asia, raising the cry of "foreign interference" and "American imperialism" whenever we engaged in a positive action. Usually, then, we beat a hasty retreat, leaving the field to the enemy.

Perhaps the most catastrophic, certainly the most tragic, part of our

Asian policy has been our failure to encourage and support the people on our side. Whether this was intentional or not, again is academic to those who were let down. What Asians saw was that those who expressed friendship for us had to be careful not to burn their bridges behind them, because we insisted that they make believe that the Communists were reasonable people, not engaged in a total war.

Asians who sincerely admired our way of life and said so were held at arm's length. A pro-American Asian was regarded as an embarrassment. The favors went to Asians who were supposed to be objective and sophisticated. To be objective you had to see the numerous imperfections on our side. That this meant proclaiming the many supposed perfections on the Communist side was merely evidence of sophistication. This highly intellectualized approach favored those who straddled the political fence and kept in good standing with pro-Communists. The Reds allowed you to remain in their good graces only by actively helping them against the United States. Our version of liberalism therefore facilitated the infiltration of Communist agents into public and private posts, from aid groups to journalism.

The effect on daily routine of a falsely liberal psychological climate cannot be exaggerated. This gave the lead to the so-called neutrality policy now being followed, to our disadvantage, by India, Indonesia, and Burma. How can we expect them to change their direction now until we do so ourselves?

Our leadership must be firm, our program expressed in plain language, to remove the ambiguities of the past. In the Korean truce talks we are fed the bitter medicine that we first forced down the throats of the Chinese Nationalists when we insisted that they share and share alike with the Communists. Each time Chiang Kai-shek agreed to a Red demand, the Communists upped it, confident — and with reason — we would insist he resume negotiations. Each time, a bit more of his prestige and power was whittled away.

The only way we can convince the Asian democrats that we are not again leading them astray is to stand by them in their fight against the Communists.

THE UNITED NATIONS, organized by Communist Russia as well as by the United States, was expected naïvely by Americans to be a parliament in which Communist Russia would participate in good faith. But the Soviets intended to utilize the UN only as a sounding board and means of infiltrating the free world. Whether we might not have done better with an outright alliance of like-minded nations is another academic question; we are married to the UN and a divorce would be long, costly, and morale-breaking.

What is vital now is to understand our needs and the Communist intent, and to seize every opportunity that offers. We must concentrate on gaining allies, using the squeeze play against the dictatorships. The UN might then evolve into what any loose world federation has to be if it is to preserve our way of life — a free world forum and bulwark. In this way, the UN would become a platform for us, and a means of penetrating the Communist bloc, thus recovering the initiative the Reds have so far held. The Communists, confronted with such a turning of the tables, would be likely to quit the UN; this might be to the good. If they didn't, that would be all right, too!

The UN is engaged in the Korea fighting by its own decision. This has great significance for the future, but should not be allowed to overshadow the fact that the Koreans and the United States are doing the bulk of the fighting and dying. Our objective should be to bring UN weight more and more into the conflict against Communist aggression in all of Asia. At present, there is at most token aid being given by our allies in Korea, with the French providing the sole manpower in Indo-China, and the British in Singapore and Malaya. Of these, only Korea's defense is recognized as a UN obligation. This point shouldn't be allowed to become a shield behind which others will decide the outcome without sharing the burden. We must not forget that the only reason the UN was able to approve prompt military action for Korea was because Moscow was then boycotting the sessions of the world organization.

A new policy in Asia must keep uppermost in our minds the shocking truth that the Communists consider themselves at war with the non-Communist world, and regard the United States as the crucial enemy. There is no Korean war, no Malayan war, no Indo-China war in the Red lexicon. There is only an all-Asia war, on an all-Asia front, with Japan, China, Korea, Hong Kong, Indo-China, Malaya, the Philippines, Indonesia, Burma, Thailand, India, Pakistan, and Ceylon each a sector on this front.

THE ONLY EVIDENCE that a shopkeeper or trishaw cyclist in a place like Rangoon sees of United States aid are the swank homes and big cars of the Americans. When the Communists tell them that all this is paid for by native sweat, and that the Americans are only using their country as a military base, bringing devastation and even greater misery, this sounds plausible to them.

This does not mean we have to abandon all long-range aid projects entirely. What we have to do is to reduce them to essentials and put them into a proper political framework. Our policy should emphasize

aid that is visible to the man in the street and in the paddy field, the results of which he can see and begin to enjoy fairly promptly.

A positive United States policy must recognize the self-evident truth that Asia's defense is the primary responsibility of Asia's democrats themselves. New nations that arose out of World War II and owe their existence largely to United States influence and UN backing certainly have the duty to help each other and other Asian lands in maintaining their sovereignty in a free world. India, with its ample population, conspicuously abstains from joining in the common military defense, while insisting on equal rights in deciding policy in the UN.

The Indonesian President, Sukarno, has often been quoted in his own country as declaring that no people deserve freedom who aren't ready to fight for it. This axiom should be incorporated into our Asia policy. Only the extending of this attitude to all the countries of Asia can cope with the large scale of Communist aggression.

The Communists never hesitate to use all the manpower available to them, while shrieking indignantly when any non-Communist country does likewise.

Nothing could please the Kremlin better than a continued attrition of American forces in Asia. We shouldn't afford Stalin this pleasure. Wherever aggression has to be met in Asia, every Asian nation should be encouraged to help in combating it.

A positive United States policy would be insulting to the Asians if it did not provide for the Asians themselves to take a steadily increasing share in the task of repelling Communism.

THE COMMUNISTS have always followed a double standard in their dealings with others. They proclaim a so-called liberation war for all Asia over the Peiping radio. It is led by Communist Party chiefs. Yet they insist they are not interfering in what they call "peoples' movements." They commit aggression in Korea, and call their troops volunteers. In Indo-China they barely keep their intervention under wraps; in Malaya the guerrilla movement is entirely Chinese.

A new United States policy for Asia should make it known to all Asia in unequivocal language that we sympathize with the efforts of Communist-enslaved populations to liberate themselves from this oppression. Liberation is *our* word.

We have come a long way since we considered propaganda a dirty word, leaving it to the Communists to exploit. They did so, with a vengeance.

The Reds have copied American methods in their evangelism, publicity, and campaigning. The Chinese Communists promised every section of the population just what it

wanted. They promised higher grain prices to farmers — and cheaper bread to city workers; they promised a classless society — led by the working class; they promised equality for all people — and came out with an exceedingly restricted definition of who the "people" were.

Of course, none of these promises could be kept. For the first time in China's history, it became a virtual colony, ruled by the Kremlin through a proconsul in Peiping.

If the Communists have been able to achieve their propaganda victories by exploiting the Chinese people's legitimate desires for peace, self-respect, and a fair share of the good things of this world, what greater victories are available to us by basing our propaganda on these simple hopes, for only our way of life has these things to give!

WE DID NOT start the psychological war. We still don't quite understand that we are in it, much less know how to combat it. Totalitarians are not so naïve as to believe that a weapon must be physically destructive; it may range from caresses to bullets, from a shipload of grain to a stick of concealed dynamite, from a leaflet to brain-washing.

This is a war for the minds of people; everything is subordinated to that end. Americans are able to understand that an auto or a soap salesman can do a better job if he believes in the quality of the auto or the soap he is selling, but we don't seem able to realize that this faith is even more necessary when we are trying to rally the Asian people against totalitarian tyranny.

No matter what policy President-elect Eisenhower and Congress agree on, it can only succeed if given honest backing in the field. Planned lack of support — variously known as sabotage and fifth columnism — is among the most effective of the publicly proclaimed, secretly implemented Communist tactics. The dominating factor is morale.

Morale is stronger than the atomic bomb, for morale determines whether this weapon can be used at all when it is needed. We have already seen this truth exemplified. The spurious Stockholm peace petition, nowhere put across on so large a scale or with so great a fanfare as in Asia, created a moral climate that made it impossible for the United States to use the bomb in Korea, whether we wanted to or not — an atmosphere had been generated by this pro-Communist campaign that would have made us sacrifice immeasurably more in Asian and even European support than we would have gained by dropping it.

A new, positive United States policy for Asia would recognize that morale is decisive in psychological warfare. Our new policy must above all be a plan to win the psychological war now being waged. It must be a plan to win.